

Message Text

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ACTION HA-02

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 12840

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T (P A R A O N E)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INFORMATION FROM BOAT REFUGEE INTERVIEWS

REF: HONG KONG 12732

1. WE INTERVIEWED TWO REFUGEES WHO WERE IN GROUP OF 181
WHO ARRIVED HERE ON SEPT. 9. THEY TOLD US THEY WERE PART
OF ORIGINAL GROUP OF ABOUT 270 REFUGEES WHO LEFT QUANG NGAI
BY BOAT ON AUGUST 24. GROUP WAS COMPRISED OF SINO-VIETNAMESE
FROM QUANG NGAI, DANANG, QUI NHON, SAIGON AND OTHER PLACES
WHO HAD ASSEMBLED IN QUANG NGAI FOR DEPARTURE ORGANIZED BY
SYNDICATE. THAT NIGHT, WATER PUMP BROKE DOWN AND REFUGEE BOAT
HEADED BACK FOR QUANG NGAI. AS BOAT WAS COMING NEAR COAST,
IT HIT SUBMERGED ROCK WHICH CREATED IMMEDIATE PANIC. REFUGEES
CROWDED ONTO THE DECK COMPARTMENT, WHICH COLLAPSED UNDER
TOO MUCH WEIGHT, CAUSING SOME REFUGEES TO FALL INTO WATER.
IT WAS DARK AND OTHER REFUGEES WERE TRAMPLED OR WERE PUSHED
INTO WATER BY PRESS OF PEOPLE. THOSE REFUGEES WHO COULD
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SWIM WERE ABLE TO REACH LY SON ISLAND. OTHERS CLUNG TO
WRECKED BOAT. VILLAGEERS AND PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICIALS
ON LY SON ISLAND SENT SMALL BOATS OUT TO THE WRECK
TO SAVE THOSE THEY COULD. IN ALL, MORE THAN 150 REFUGEES
WERE DROWNED. REFUGEES FROM WRECKED BOAT REMAINED ON
LY SON ISLAND, WHERE THEY HAD TO PAY FOR FOOD AND LODGING.
ON SEPT. 2, PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICIALS TOLD THOSE WHO COULD

SWIM, ABOUT 33 IN NUMBER, THEY SHOULD ASSEMBLE ON BEACH. THERE A BOAT WAS POINTED OUT TO THEM AND THEY WERE TOLD TO SWIM TO IT. WHEN THEY DID, THEY FOUND IT WAS REFUGEE BOAT READY TO DEPART WITH ALMOST 150 REFUGEES ON BOARD. AT FIRST, BOAT LEADER REFUSED PICK UP THESE REFUGEES, BUT FINALLY AGREED TO ALLOW THEM TO BOARD. THAT BOAT THEN PROCEEDED TO HONG KONG AND WAS ASSISTED ON FINAL DAY BY TWO HONG KONG FISHING JUNKS AFTER ITS MOTOR CEASED FUNCTIONING.

2. ONE REFUGEE TOLD US THAT FOUR BOAT DEPARTURES WERE PLANNED ABOUT SAME TIME FROM QUE NHON. THREE BOATS DEPARTED ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 19. TWO ARRIVED HERE, BUT THIRD BOAT WITH APPROXIMATELY 100 REFUGEES HAS NOT TURNED UP. FOURTH AND SUBSEQUENT DEPARTURE WAS 171 REFUGEES RESCUED FROM SINKING REFUGEE BOAT NEAR HONG KONG BY "AMERICAN MOHAWK."

3. ANOTHER REFUGEE TOLD US THAT BOAT FROM VUNG TAU HAD MISHAP NEAR COAST AND SOME REFUGEES WERE DROWNED. HE SAID AT LEAST 20 BODIES WERE BROUGHT BACK TO QUANG TUNG HOSPITAL IN SAIGON FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS.

4. UNHCR REP CARPENTER SAID YESTERDAY THAT REFUGEES REPORTED BOAT WITH APPROXIMATELY 150 PERSONS IS DUE TO ARRIVE HONG KONG SEPT. 15.

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5. FACT THAT SOME REFUGEES MENTIONED PARA 1 ABOVE WERE FROM DANANG CONFIRMS PREVIOUS ACCOUNT (HONG KONG 11819) THAT SECURITY HAS TIGHTENED IN THAT CITY AND IT NOT BEING USED AT PRESENT FOR ORGANIZED ESCAPES. SECURITY CRACKDOWN MAY BE RESULT OF REPORTED MURDER SOME WEEKS AGO OF TOP SECURITY OFFICIAL IN DANANG. IT APPEARS THAT ORGANIZERS ARE NOW USING VUNG TAU, QUANG NGAI AND QUE NHON. IN VUNG TAU, IT APPEARS THAT CORRUPTION IS MORE WIDE SPREAD THAN IN LATTER TWO CITIES, WHERE APPARENTLY ONLY COASTAL PATROL UNITS ARE INVOLVED.
SHOESMITH

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